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NOVEMBER 25, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN VIETNAM

COMBAT ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE COUNTRY CONTINUES TO BE LIGHT WITH MOST OF THE FIGHTING TAKING PLACE IN THE PLEIKU HIGHLANDS OF MILITARY REGION 2.

COMBAT ACTIVITY IN MILITARY REGION 1 WAS AT A LOW LEVEL YESTERDAY AS MOST OF QUANG TRI PROVINCE REMAINS FLOODED AND ROAD CONDITIONS ARE POOR. ALONG THE NORTHERN FRONT, MARINES AND AIRBORNE UNITS CONTINUE TO PREPARE FOR RENEWED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.

THE FIGHTING IN MILITARY REGION 2 HAS BEEN CENTERED NEAR THANH GIAO WHERE ARVN UNITS REPORT MAKING HEAVY CONTACT.

THE ACTION IN MILITARY REGIONS 3 AND 4 CONTINUE TO BE LIGHT AS THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO AVOID LARGE-SCALE CONTACTS.

A TOTAL OF 353 U.S. TACTICAL AIR STRIKES WERE FLOWN TODAY, 53 OF WHICH STRUCK TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM. IN ADDITION 56 B-52 STRIKES WERE FLOWN IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND 43 STRIKING TARGETS IN NORTH VIETNAM.

NGA, NSA, DOD, DIA & ARMY Reviews Completed.

MILITARY REGION 1

NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS WERE REPORTED BY THE MARINES OR THE AIRBORNE AS COMBAT ACTIVITY WAS AT A LOW LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

-- ARVN MARINES AND AIRBORNE UNITS CONTINUE TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR RENEWED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS ALONG THE NORTHERN FRONT. FORWARD ELEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE HARASSED BY ENEMY SHELLINGS.

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-- LITTLE ENEMY RESISTANCE HAS BEEN ENCOUNTERED AS ELEMENTS OF THE 3RD ARVN DIVISION BEGAN A SWEEP OF THE HIGH GROUND JUST NORTH OF THE VU GIA RIVER IN QUANG NAM PROVINCE.

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-- ACTING ON REPORTS THAT THE ENEMY PLANS TO ATTACK FIRE SUPPORT BASE SAN JUAN HILL IN QUANG NGAI PROVINCE, ARVN UNITS HAVE BEGUN OPERATIONS TO CLEAR ENEMY FORCES IN THE AREA. SO FAR, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACTS.

-- CASUALTIES FOR THE REGION YESTERDAY WERE 30 ENEMY KILLED AND THREE CAPTURED. SOUTH VIETNAMESE LOSSES WERE 25 KILLED AND 91 WOUNDED, MOST OF WHICH WERE CAUSED BY INDIRECT FIRE ATTACKS.

MILITARY REGION 2

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COMBAT ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO BE CENTERED IN THE PLEIKU HIGHLANDS.

-- SOUTH-WEST OF PLEIKU, ELEMENTS OF THE 41ST ARVN REGIMENT REPORTED MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONTACT LATE YESTERDAY AND AGAIN TODAY AS THEY CONTINUE THEIR DRIVE TO THANH GIAO, WHICH THEY EXPECT TO REACH TODAY.

-- ELEMENTS OF THE 45TH REGIMENT ALSO REPORTED MAKING HEAVY CONTACT IN THE THANH GIAO AREA.

-- VNAF PILOTS FLEW RESUPPLY MISSIONS INTO THANH GIAO DESPITE ENEMY AA AND MORTAR FIRE AND EVACUATED 77 WOUNDED SOLDIERS ON THE RETURN FLIGHTS.

-- ARVN UNITS CONDUCTED RELIEF OPERATIONS ALONG ROUTE 14 IN KONTUM PROVINCE AND ALONG THE COAST IN BINH DINH PROVINCE IN ORDER TO ALLOW UNITS TIME FOR REFITTING AND REST. ONLY MINOR ACTIVITY WAS REPORTED.

-- IN TWO SEPARATE CONTACTS IN LAM DONG AND BINH THUAN PROVINCES, TERRITORIAL FORCES AGAIN MADE A GOOD ACCOUNT OF THEMSELVES AS THEY KILLED 25 VIET CONG AND CAPTURED 13 WHILE SUSTAINING LIGHT CASUALTIES.

-- THERE WERE 123 ENEMY KILLED IN THE REGION YESTERDAY. FRIENDLY LOSSES WERE 18 KILLED AND 45 WOUNDED.

MILITARY REGION 3

ACTION IN THE REGION REMAINS AT A LOW LEVEL AS THE ENEMY AVOIDED SIGNIFICANT CONTACT WHILE HARASSING FRIENDLY POSITIONS.

-- THE 18TH ARVN DIVISION IS CONTINUING TO MOVE ITS FORCES FROM AN LOC TO LONG KHANH, PHUOC TUY, AND BIEN HOA PROVINCES. THE COMMAND POST WILL BE MOVED TODAY TO XUAN LOC IN LONG KHANH

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PROVINCE. THE COMPLETE RELIEF OF THE 18TH DIVISION IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF NOVEMBER. THE III CORPS RANGER HEADQUARTERS ASSUMES COMMAND AT AN LOC AT MIDNIGHT TONIGHT.

-- THERE WERE 46 ENEMY KILLED, WHILE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CASUALTIES WERE ONE KILLED AND 12 WOUNDED.

MILITARY REGION 4

THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO AVOID LARGE-SCALE ENGAGEMENTS WHILE LIMITING HIS INITIATIVES TO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND ECONOMY OF FORCE ACTIONS.

-- LIGHT CASUALTIES WERE CAUSED BY A TERRORIST ATTACK ON A COFFEE HOUSE. THIS IS THE 17TH REPORTED INCIDENT THIS MONTH COMPARED TO NINE DURING OCTOBER.

-- THE NUMBER OF ENEMY NIGHT INCURSIONS INTO THE HAMLETS HAVE DROPPED SINCE THE IV CORPS FORCES HAVE COMPLETED THEIR MOVEMENT INTO THE POPULATED AREAS.

-- ALL SIGNIFICANT GROUND CONTACTS WERE INITIATED BY TERRITORIAL FORCES WITH MOST OF THE ACTION IN KIEN GIANG, AN XUYEN, AND KIEN PHONG PROVINCES.

-- TOTAL CASUALTIES FOR THE DAY WERE 183 ENEMY KILLED. THERE WERE 18 FRIENDLY KILLED AND 92 WOUNDED.

U.S. AIR AND NAVAL ACTIVITY

THE FOLLOWING AIR SORTIES WERE FLOWN TODAY:

	MR-1	MR-2	MR-3	MR-4	NVN	TOTAL
TACAIR US	124	28	122	26	53	353
TACAIR VNAF	3	33	70	43	0	149
B-52	30	11	12	3	43	99

THERE WERE NO SORTIES OVER CAMBODIA OR LAOS.

YESTERDAY, THE FOLLOWING U.S. TACTICAL AIR STRIKES WERE FLOWN OVER NORTH VIETNAM:

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RP-1	RP-2	RP-3	RP-4	RP-5	RP-6A	RP-6B	OFFSHORE	TOTAL
43	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	55

THERE WERE NO SORTIES FLOWN NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL.

U.S. TACTICAL AIRCRAFT FLEW 55 ATTACK SORTIES. POOR WEATHER HAMPERED AIR OPERATIONS FOR THE 5TH STRAIGHT DAY AND ONLY NINE SCHEDULED TARGETS WERE HIT. STRIKES AGAINST INTERDICTION POINTS AND TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY WERE ALSO CURTAILED BY ADVERSE WEATHER.

F-111S STRUCK EIGHT TARGETS IN THE LOWER PANHANDLE DURING THE NIGHT. THESE TARGETS INCLUDED A MILITARY COMPLEX, TRUCK PARKS, INTERDICTION POINTS, AND A TRANSSHIPMENT POINT. NAVY A-6 AIRCRAFT BOMBED THE SON TRIEU HIGHWAY BRIDGE 48 MILES NORTHWEST OF DONG HOI. THE RESULTS OF THESE STRIKES WERE NOT OBSERVED.

THREE TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE SORTIES WERE FLOWN. THERE WERE NO ENEMY REACTIONS.

SAM UNIT MOVES

SINCE THE CESSATION OF BOMBING IN THE NORTH, INTERCEPTED COMMUNICATIONS HAVE INDICATED THAT SEVERAL SAM UNITS NEAR TO OR NORTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL ARE EITHER MOVING OR PREPARING TO MOVE. THEIR DESTINATIONS ARE NOT KNOWN, BUT THE TREND IS TOWARD THE SOUTH. AS OF OCTOBER 23, THE ENEMY HAD 24 FIRING BATTALIONS IN THE NORTH AND 16 IN THE SOUTH. WHEN THE CURRENT MOVES ARE COMPLETED, IT IS BELIEVED THAT 22 BATTALIONS WILL BE IN THE SOUTH, WHILE 20 WILL REMAIN NORTH OF 20 DEGREES TO DEFEND THE HANOI-HAIPHONG AREA. THE ADDITIONAL UNITS IN THE SOUTH WILL ALLOW SAM COVERAGE TO FILL AN EXISTING GAP BETWEEN VINH AND DONG HOI AND TO EXTEND INTO LAOS NEAR THE MU GIA PASS AND TCHEPONE.

NAVAL SURFACE OPERATIONS

THREE DESTROYERS CONDUCTED NAVAL GUNFIRE STRIKES. THEIR TARGETS INCLUDED HIGHWAY BRIDGES, FERRIES, FORDS, TRANSSHIPMENT POINTS, POL SITES, A BARGE REPAIR FACILITY, A TRUCK PARK, AND A WATERCRAFT. THE SHIPS RECEIVED ABOUT 20 ROUNDS OF INEFFECTIVE HOSTILE FIRE. NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY WAS NOTED AT THE HON LA ANCHORAGE.

CAMBODIA

A PRELIMINARY REPORT INDICATES THAT ENEMY FORCES CUT ROUTE 4 IN EIGHT PLACES JUST NORTH OF STUNG CHHAY LAST NIGHT.

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LAOS

LEAD ELEMENTS OF THE FOUR IRREGULAR BATTALIONS THAT WERE AIR-LIFTED NORTHEAST OF MUONG PHALANE ON NOVEMBER 21 ARE ATTEMPTING TO DISLODGE ENEMY TROOPS FROM ENTRENCHED POSITIONS ABOUT A MILE NORTH OF THE TOWN. ANOTHER FOUR-BATTALION GOVERNMENT FORCE IS CLASHING WITH COMPANY-SIZED UNITS AS IT ADVANCES ON MUONG PHALANE FROM THE EAST. MOST OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE 29TH REGIMENT HAS FALLEN BACK TO PROTECT MUONG PHALANE, AND INTERCEPTED MESSAGES DISCLOSE THAT COMMUNIST COMMANDERS HAVE REQUESTED REINFORCEMENTS TO HELP COUNTER ANY GOVERNMENT MOVES EAST OF THE TOWN.

COMMUNIST SHELLING ATTACKS HAVE FORCED IRREGULARS TO YIELD SEVERAL RECENTLY CAPTURED HILL-TOP POSITIONS SOME TWELVE MILES NORTHEAST OF THE ROYAL CAPITAL OF LUANG PRABANG. LAO ARMY UNITS WHICH HAD BEEN MEETING LITTLE OPPOSITION AS THEY MOVED SOUTH FROM THE NAM OU VALLEY TO LINK UP ARE ALSO COMING UNDER INCREASED COMMUNIST PRESSURE. THESE UNITS ARE REGROUPING AFTER FIGHTING OFF ENEMY GROUND ASSAULTS AND MORTAR ATTACKS ON NOVEMBER 22 AND 23. 25X1

THE COMMUNISTS THUS FAR HAVE NOT FOLLOWED UP THEIR BRIEF ATTACK ON NOVEMBER 12 AGAINST THAKHEK, A PROVINCIAL CAPITAL IN LAOS ACROSS THE MEKONG RIVER FROM THE U.S. AIRBASE AT NAKHOM PHANOM, THAILAND. DESPITE ENEMY PROPAGANDA STATEMENTS THE DISPOSITION OF KNOWN COMMUNIST FORCES IN THE THAKHEK AREA SUGGESTS THAT A MAJOR ENEMY ATTACKS IS NOT LIKELY. ONLY ONE PATHET LAO BATTALION IS NEAR THE TOWN, WHILE MAJOR NORTH VIETNAMESE UNITS ARE STILL FAR TO THE NORTH.

CHINESE ROAD-BUILDING ACTIVITY

THE CHINESE HAVE APPARENTLY STARTED A NEW ROAD-BUILDING PROJECT IN THE NORTHWEST.

[redacted]

THE IMPROVEMENTS MAY BE INTENDED TO ALLOW COMMUNIST FORCES EASIER ACCESS TO AN AREA SOME 30 MILES SOUTHWEST OF NAM TRA WHERE FRIENDLY LAO FORCES ARE OPERATING. THE CHINESE MAY ALSO PLAN TO EXTEND THE ROAD THE FULL 80 MILES TO BAN HOUSEI SAI. TO THE EAST AND SOUTH, NO NEW ROAD EXTENSIONS WERE OBSERVED NEAR MUONG KHOUA OR PAK BENG.

SAIGON DENIES CRITICISM OF DR. KISSINGER

THE GVN'S MINISTRY OF INFORMATION RELEASED A STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 24 DENYING PRESS REPORTS OF A PERSONAL ATTACK ON DR. KISSINGER

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BY RADIO SAIGON ON NOVEMBER 21. THE STATEMENT DESCRIBED THE STORIES AS "TOTALLY UNFOUNDED AND ILL-INTENTIONED," AND A "DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO PROVOKE DISAGREEMENT" BETWEEN THE GVN AND THE UNITED STATES.
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